The Sun.

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STALLED IN THE TUNNEL.

AN UNDERGROUND PANIC ON THE NEW LONDON ROAD.

The Electricity Gave Out and There Was No Ventilation—300 Passengers Grew Faint and Sick and Finally Escaped by Crawling to Fresh Air a Quarter of a Mile Away—Very Important Change in English Criminal Law—Reforms in Racing Law Are Put in Operation—The Growing Commerce of Southampton.

LONDON, Oct. 15.—The experience of a train-load of 300 passengers stalled in a narrow tunnel many feet below the level of London streets—underneath the river Thames in fact—has thoroughly alarmed Londoners who had welcomed the completion of a new underground electric railway. There had been a great crowd at the Waterloo station to welcome home the Guards from their campaign in the Soudan. Of course there was a rush afterward to get to the city, and the new electric line, which plunges beneath the river and up the other side to its outlet in front of the Bank of England, was crowded to its utmost capacity. The electric power proved inadequate to carry an overloaded train up the heavy grade from beneath the river to the city terminus and the cars stopped. The electric lights grew dim, but there was no uneasiness at first among the entombed passengers.

After a few minutes, however, the air grew heavy. There were no choking odors, of course, such as make travel by the ordinary London underground lines an abomination, but a peculiar sensation of suffocation was soon felt by the closely crowded men and women. It grew worse rapidly. Opening doors and windows did no good, for the iron tube through which the small, low-roofed circular carriages run is but little larger than the cars themselves. It was not long before the passengers became panic-stricken. They left the cars, and making their way with considerable difficulty through the narrow space on each side between the train and the walls of the tunnel they finally reached the city terminus, about a quarter of a mile distant, on foot.

The theory of deep underground electric railways such as are being constructed in several parts of London, and which have been advocated for years by one of the New York rapid transit factions, is that no ventilation is necessary beyond that automatically provided by the motion of the trains themselves. Experiments have seemed to justify the theory, and no serious difficulty has been encountered when everything has run smoothly. But no provision has been made on the two or three short lines constructed upon this principle for accidents or failure of power such as occurred on the City and Waterloo line the other day. This line is scarcely a mile long. It dips down from either terminus to its lowest level beneath the river. Gravity carries the trains over two-thirds of the distance each way. Electricity is used for the remaining one-third of the distance. Each track is in a separate tunnel and the chance of accident on a line so short and so simply constructed is, of course, small. But it exists, and conservative Londoners, not to say the Government Board of Trade, will insist that some provision shall be made for supplying air to victims of such a mischance as that above described. The *Lancet* to-day is not a bit too emphatic when it says:

"It is assumed, and correctly, that the advance of a train through a tube which it closely fits is sufficient to maintain an adequate change of air in the tunnels, in which case no extra provision for ventilation need be made, but in the event of a breakdown the supply of air would soon be exhausted and the result might be disastrous and comparable with the awful historic tragedy of the Black Hole in Calcutta. Either an improved system of keeping up a supply of air must be adopted on the underground electric railways or else a relay of motors must be immediately at hand at both ends of the tunnel to draw the trains out in the event of a breakdown. The former course would be safer, for in the event of a train leaving the rails the delay would be necessarily great and correspondingly serious to the imprisoned passengers. The matter must be referred to the Board of Trade, which we hope in the present instance has not committed a serious oversight. Steps must be taken, if such by some inconceivable want of perspicuity is not already the case, to remove the awful possibility of suffocating a trainload of people. It would be interesting to know whether the underground electric lines in course of construction have included in their plans the provision of an air supply should any necessity arise."

The most important change that has been made for fifty years in the criminal law of England came into operation this week. It is the Prisoners' Evidence Act of the last Parliamentary session, which enables an accused person to give evidence on his own behalf. Hitherto, except in very rare offences, he has not been an admissible witness. From now on every prisoner is invited, though not compelled, to give his own account of the matter on oath and to be cross-examined on it. The husband or wife, as the case may be, is also available. Hitherto neither has been allowed to give evidence for the other in a criminal case. In other countries it has been thought surprising that so reasonable a reform should not have been carried out before. This is not the view of the legal community here. About half the Judges and many of the busiest criminal lawyers are opposed to it, but the first dar's experience goes to justify the general sense of the community that the new system should be adopted.

The old prisoner who, when asked whether he was guilty, replied: "How can I know till I hear the evidence?" will be expected to furnish it himself. Trials are now likely to last longer and convictions to be more numerous. It is already evident that in the large class of cases where a number of persons are charged with some form of joint swindling it will go ill with the gang if they volunteer to follow each other into the witness box. If one alone makes that choice, and gives a version framed to exculpate himself, it is certain that the others will not stand silently in the dock when they believe that they can do the same for themselves. Thus their stories are tested against each other.

One of the first cases under the new law was of this description. Two men who stood in the relation of employer and workman were charged together with felony. They had been employed repairing the roof of a wharf. After they left with their tools and cart, the latter was searched and found to contain a quantity of valuable goods—tea and wire netting—that had belonged to ship cargoes stored on the premises. It would have been disastrous to refuse to give evidence, for the only hope of acquittal was to satisfy the jury that the goods were there by mistake or that some one else had put them there. Under the old law the counsel for the defence could argue in favor of either of these explanations and suggest to the jury that if his clients could go into the witness box they would make it all clear. The result in this case was that the employer who might have been acquitted was convicted. His story was that he thought the netting was being used in the work he had undertaken of covering the roof, and that under that impression it was put in a sack, but he did not know it was to be taken away. It came to the other man's turn to explain how a number of walking sticks from the wharf came to be shoved inside the sack with the wire netting. He said the foreman let him have them. He saw he was not believed, and then he "rounded" on his employer, who, till then, might have had the benefit of the doubt. The result was that the jury formed a strong impression that each man knew what the other was about and both were convicted.

This consequence of the new legislation will be very important in company cases where directors are charged with falsifying balance sheets and similar offences. Hitherto in England a jury has never convicted, except on the most abundant evidence, in complicated cases of this kind; and of late prosecutions in some very bad cases have not been undertaken because it was known that only out of the directors' own mouths could the charges be proved.

The availability of the husband or wife under the new act is also most important. The extraordinary Sykes litigation early in the year, where juries found that signatures of Sir Tatton Sykes to bills for enormous amounts were forged, probably had no sequel in a criminal prosecution, because of the inadmissibility of Lady Sykes's evidence in a case affecting her husband. The Judges who object to the new law argue that as they must now question the prisoner to elicit the truth, the former invaluable security for absolute impartiality in the eyes of the accused will be gone. Such questions must be hostile in form, and they fear the accused may think that justice is refused to them because of the attitude of the Judge toward them. This objection has not impressed the public as having much substance.

A more serious anxiety is that the new act does not lead to logic-chopping bickerings between Judge and prisoner, such as every anarchist trial in France gives rise to. There they express admiration for the system England has now discarded, because a prisoner was not compelled to "*couper sa langue*" in an interrogatory with the Judge, who had to have the case completely proved without the former's intervention. As a measure of practical procedure the new act has become necessary through the incapacity of the British detective police. Not only do they fail to detect more than half the serious crimes that are committed, but even when they do lay a notorious ruffian by the heels he is frequently liberated after repeated remands, because they have failed to prevent his accomplices from "removing" the necessary witnesses. There will now be a greater readiness in magistrates to commit for trial, seeing that cross-examination may compel the man to prove his guilt out of his own mouth in cases where the police have failed to trace evidence for the prosecution.

The high court of the English turf—the Jockey Club—has carried through some important reforms in the rules of horse racing this week. They are all directed to improving the staying powers of English thoroughbreds. The experience of recent years has shown that French horses are better over long distances than English. The latter, though they have been started for several, have not carried off one of the big Paris prizes this year. The Gold Cup at Ascot, on the other hand, brought out a field of five last June and only one was an English horse. Three were French and one was Argentine. The trouble undoubtedly arises from sprinkling races among two-year-olds too early in their careers and consequent lack of stamina for the big open events later on. Two-year-old events generally lead to lively betting, and have consequently been encouraged at many race meetings. The new rules declare that there must not be more than two such events at any meeting, and that no two-year-olds shall run in any race with more than 200 sovereigns added before June 1. Even this is a long way behind the French rules. A two-year-old may not race there before Sept. 1.

Another alteration in the rules is that one-half at least of the total amount of prize money at every meeting shall be apportioned to races of a mile or over for three-year-olds or upward. Further, there must not be more than two races to which three-year-olds or upward are admitted of less than seven furlongs. Even more drastic rules than those now carried by the Jockey Club were proposed to it twenty years ago by Sir Joseph Hawley and Mr. Chaplain and supported by the then Lord Derby; but they were lost by twenty-five votes to eighteen, although the minority included some of the best sportsmen on the turf. Unfortunately, Sir Joseph Hawley was then one of the most unpopular men in racing circles, a heavy gambler and patron of most of the abuses he condemned. A few weeks before he brought forward his important reforms he had been hissed on Epsom racecourse for having scratched Vagabond, who was a great favorite, for the City and Suburban. Feeling ran so high that at dinner at the Jockey Club the late Lord Hardwicke threw an orange at Sir Joseph's head.

Of his then supporters the Duke of Richmond is almost the only one now alive; while three, Sir Frederick Johnstone, Prince Soltykoff and Lord Abington, have lived to see their vote of twenty years ago against restricting two-year-old racing reversed this week. In recent years horses which have run often at that age, even if they have won the Derby the following season, have been almost done with when they were three-year-olds. A sound sportsman says that for two-year-olds to win short sprinting races they must be forced almost from birth and thus the way young horses are fed is equivalent to giving the meat of strong men to children and filling them with all manner of rich food.

One of the most successful men the turf here has ever known was Sir Charles Bunbury, who won the first Derby, and twice later was victorious in the same race. It used to be said that he starved his young stock, which really meant that he had them brought up in a natural and hardy manner, giving them plenty of liberty. The present difficulty is that as race meetings increase in number horses cannot be found to meet the demand. There has been consequently a growing tendency to get more runners by means of two-year-old racing, which at early periods undoubtedly saps the breed. Probably the new rules will result in some meetings dropping out of existence. Few sportsmen will mourn their departure.

Little by little, for sixty years, the Southampton Docks have grown. On Oct. 12, 1838, the foundation stone of the first tidal dock was laid; on Oct. 12, this week, the coping stone to mark their completion was laid with Masonic ceremony and rejoicing. The first dock was opened in 1843, by which time the London and Southampton Railway had made its way into the dock premises. The port of Southampton became known all over the world as the station for the East and West Indies. It was a memorable event when the paddle steamer Washington, "a splendid vessel of 2,045 tons, took in her cargo and coals and left the dock for New York, fully laden." Thus the first line of American steamers was established at Southampton. The port was hardly a success for long. Postal business would not come; thus there were financial difficulties; and in 1881 the Peninsular and Oriental Company, its best customer, ceased to use the dock. Efforts were then made to increase the accommodation, and the Southwestern Railway Company subscribed a million dollars to the undertaking. The result was the Empress Dock, one of the finest in the world, which ships of the deepest draught can enter and leave at all states of the tide. The Queen opened it in July, 1890. Business increased so rapidly that the railway company purchased the entire dock side, and the Dock Company, which had managed the concern and weathered the storms of over half a century, ceased to exist. After the first six months' working under the railway company, it was found that the net earnings were sufficient to pay the full interest on the purchase money; and when the records of a whole year came to be analyzed it was seen that the tonnage of goods imported into the docks had increased by 32 per cent., the tonnage of exports by 56 per cent., and the passenger traffic by 21,000, or 25 per cent. The tonnage using Southampton rose from 2,369,000 in 1892 to 4,447,000 in 1898, or 87½ per cent.; the passengers in 1892 numbered 122,000; in 1896 they were 214,000, an increase of 75 per cent.

There are now more than two miles of quays. Compare this with the occurrence thought remarkable enough at the time to be recorded of the 600-ton steamer Chieftain, plying between London and Lisbon, calling at Southampton on Aug. 25, 1837, and taking on board one solitary bag of letters from the Post Office. During the first week of September this year 3,328 bags of letters and 594 hampers of parcels were sent from the port. Its progress, when put in figures, seems almost American to English eyes. They marvel at the refrigerator capable of holding 4,000 quarters of beef, and at the grain storage, where the machinery is capable of lifting 200 tons of corn per hour. Its latest glory is, of course, the Prince of Wales dry dock, the largest in the world—750 feet long, 97½ feet wide at the sill, and 91 feet at the coping level, 35 feet deep, and with a capacity of 75,000 tons. It can be lengthened to 1,000 feet. Corn, wine, and oil were laid from gold vessels at the coping stone ceremony this week as emblems of plenty, happiness, and power. With the American line putting its best ships back to the passenger traffic the rivalry between Southampton and Liverpool will soon be as vigorous as ever.

The quarrels of authors have always been a source of mild merriment to the outside world. We have the promise of some fun of this variety over the mutilation or murder—as some have aggravated the crime—of Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac" in America. They are organizing a literary indignation meeting in Paris. French authors may be depended on to use the occasion for emptying the vials of their wrath over other matters. They have never forgiven the fact that the English and American stage up to the date of the Berne Convention lived on French plays, for which not one farthing was ever paid to the author.

Prolific dramatists like M. Morton, Benjamin Webster, John Baldwin Buckstone, Dion Boucicault, Sterling Coyne, Planché, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, and many more took their plays and plots wherever they could find them, as, unfortunately, they were legally entitled to do. Whereupon, this record of the past has rankled in the Frenchmen's breasts ever since. The thought was bitter gall to them that such classics as "Box and Cox," and the whole répertoire of Maddison Morton's farces, "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," "The Two Orphans," and others, which brought in thousands of pounds, were not taken, but were stolen from the French. It was a moral debt, and that debt was never paid.

The crime of "Cyrano" is not on so sordid a plane, but the admirers of the masterpiece are at present in an ugly temper for many reasons. It has been a dead failure in Berlin. The way English actor-managers are fighting any of the rights here is ominous. They eagerly resign priority to each other. Mr. Charles Wyndham has just gracefully resigned his version back to Sir Henry Irving, who, we are told, is to produce the play after all. On the larger question Mr. Clement Scott puts in a word this week for the adaptor in general. He writes:

"Take Rostand's beautiful work, 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' for instance. If it were translated, however well—literally translated, I mean—it would not run one week in England, for it would play until 1 o'clock in the morning. No translator or adapter could alter the scheme of the play. The leading interest must rest with the hero of the nose. But presumably every manager cuts his play according to his cloth. If Mansfield plays *Cyrano*, *Rozane* must be kept down. If Ada Rehan plays *Rozane*, the cutting must be with *Cyrano*, for she is the 'draw,' though, if she were Mrs. Siddons and Sarah Bernhardt rolled into one, she could not take the dramatic interest away from *Cyrano*. It is the same with Shakespeare. Every actor-manager cuts his Shakespeare according to his cloth. I have before me the acting editions of Charles Kean, of Edwin Booth, of Augustin Daly, of Henry Irving, of Wilson Barrett, of Forbes Robertson, and many more, and they all vary. To play Shakespeare as he was written *toidem verbis* would be an absurdity; but no stage edition, so far as I can see, deserves the charge of irreverence or vandalism more than the other. Every play presented on the stage requires editing. The play sent in to the theatre is, I maintain, never the play acted on the stage."

He adds:

"I cannot conceive that any human being, with the slightest knowledge of our stage, would buy 'Le Cheminean' or 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' for instance, with the condition attached to the purchase that not one syllable or word should be altered. It is all very well to throw about such expressions as 'literary vandals,' and so on, but English and American managers are not children, and happen to know how to conduct their own business. They do not buy a pig in a poke."

Dr. Edmund Owen opened the 126th session of the Medical Society of London with some interesting extracts from a volume in the society's library. This is the diary or commonplace book of the Rev. John Ward, M. A., Oxon, who was vicar of Stratford-on-Avon from 1662 to 1681. Ward had there learned many facts concerning Shakespeare, who died forty-two years before. His diary has thus such valuable extracts as: "I have heard that Mr. Shakespear was a natural wit without any art at all; he frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year," which in those times was a large amount, corresponding perhaps to three or four thousand pounds to-day. Another extract ran as follows: "Shakespear, Drayton, and Ben Johnson had a merry meeting and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." Dr. Owen added that in those times it was customary to call obscure diseases "feavours," just as they were now called "influenzas" or "neuroses."

The editor of the *Cantab*, an undergraduate journal published at Cambridge, has been trying to beat Mr. Rudyard Kipling out of a cheap contribution to its columns. Here is Rudyard's first reply:

THE ELMS, ROTTINGDEAN, NEAR BRIGHTON, Sept. 17, 1898.

To the Editor the Cantab:

There once was a writer who wrote:
"Dear Sir: In reply to your note
Of yesterday's date,
I am sorry to state
It's no good at the prices you quote."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

The editor wrote again requesting to be informed of Mr. Kipling's lowest and most favored nation's terms. Rudyard replied:

"DEAR SIR: Heaven forbid that the staff of the *Cantab* should go about pawning their raiment in a public-spirited attempt to secure a contribution from my pen! The fact is that I can't do things to order with any satisfaction to myself or the buyer. Otherwise I would have sent you something. Sincerely,

"RUDYARD KIPLING."

But still the pertinacious *Cantab* tried it on. This time they asked for a photograph. The great man who can't write to order was drawn a third time. He wrote:

"As to photos of myself, I have not one by me at present, but when I find one I will send it, but not for publication, because my beauty is such that it fades like a flower if you expose it. Very sincerely, RUDYARD KIPLING."

The first letter was illustrated by a pen-and-ink sketch of Kipling standing on a pile of MSS. in a circle of bags of dollars, and the second with a kind of silhouette of the same, with his head poked through the cover of an umbrella—perhaps intended to keep off further demands for copy. Out of these materials the ingenious editor of the *Cantab* has constructed an illustrated article. He has got his Kipling on his own terms after all.

The *Cantab* is very sore over the defeat of its university in all the athletic contests it has engaged in with Oxford in recent years. It offers in huge type in a proclamation poster a reward of 10,000 thanks if any freshmen can produce promising material with which to regain the lead in the following contests: The boat race, the cricket match, the Rugby football match, the athletic sports, the racquets, the boxing and fencing. H. B. C.